

this country. It is time for us to come together and put an end to the senseless violence.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I am starting to feel a little bit like a broken record. I am here on the floor again to echo the concerns of my constituents and so many folks across our great country. People across the country are cautiously checking their bank accounts, and they are looking at the price of milk, bread, and things that they have to buy every day. They are driving out of their way to see which gas stations even have gas, and when they do find that, they are looking for the lowest price.

Just as we are starting to come out of the pandemic, prices are starting to rise, and our dollar isn't going as far. Why? Because the Democrats want to spend their way out of a pandemic, and it really makes no sense. They are throwing trillions around like it is Monopoly money. It is not targeted to those who need it the most. It is on policy items that only appease their base—the far left—not even a majority of their party. They are flooding the zone with borrowed money like a credit card with no limit. They did it with their stimulus package earlier in the year, and it was disguised as a COVID relief package. Now they are getting ready to try the same thing again.

Last week, Leader SCHUMER announced that the Democrats had reached an agreement on a budget reconciliation resolution, which is like the pregame warm-up to the next reconciliation package. The pricetag for that agreement has been set at \$3.5 trillion. Let me take a minute to highlight what I think is wrong with the bill.

First of all, I am not sure how anyone can call this an agreement. One Democratic Senator, who doesn't appear to have been consulted on the so-called agreement in the first place, said the package needs to be fully paid for. Let me translate that to you. That means we need tax increases. Last week, we talked about the 30 new tax increases that will probably be in this bill. On the other hand, we have Democratic Senators saying it is OK if this package adds to the deficit—\$3.5 trillion added to the \$30 trillion that we are already in debt. We already know at least one Senator wants the top-line number to be as much as \$6 trillion while others are calling for \$2 to \$3 tril-

lion, which, by the way, is still too much spending.

It doesn't seem like everyone has fully committed to this so-called agreement. It appears the Democrats are in disarray when it comes to agreeing to this. Announcing there is an agreement when they still have Members of their own party arguing over the final top-line number and how it will be paid for is a pretty interesting strategy. The only thing I can guess is that the strategy is really to pull the wool over all of our eyes. Trying to sell the agreement of a top-line number as a win is like saying that you have won the game after the first snap.

Folks, you have to play the game. You can't go by the first quarter's results. You have to play the entire game.

Second, I can't understand why some of my colleagues across the aisle are still trying to sell this tax and spending bill as human and soft infrastructure. Most people have never heard of that. I haven't been up here long, but I know enough to know there is really no such thing as human and soft infrastructure. For some reason, we keep adding definitions to Webster's Dictionary. It appears that our Democratic colleagues have, once again, duped a few members of the media, as they can't stop parroting this "human infrastructure" phrase.

Let's just call the package what it is: a spending plan on progressive social justice policies that will be paid for by the American taxpayers by 30 tax increases. It has nothing to do with infrastructure, even if they could define what infrastructure of the human and soft variety is. I know reckless tax and spending spree is not as catchy as soft infrastructure, but at least it is accurate.

Lastly—and this is the most important part—there are costs associated with the level of spending that the Democrats are laying out, real costs that hurt American families. Whether it is fully paid for by tax increases or whether it adds to the deficit, it all boils down to the same thing: the cost to American families across our country, the small business owner, the operator, the manufacturing worker, the farmer, the moms and dads. Hard-working Americans across the country will be impacted at the absolute worst time, when they are trying to recover from a pandemic.

Take the cost of tax increases on small businesses, for example. According to the Job Creators Network, 1 million—that is 1 million—small businesses will feel the financial strain of tax increases through this bill—1 million. Many of these small businesses are still struggling after having been shuttered in place for a year and having battled against government-induced workforce shortages. With only 8 percent of small businesses on a solid economic footing after this past year—only 8 percent of our small businesses are really, actually, getting back on

their feet—we should be working to help every small business see the light at the end of the tunnel, not increasing the heavy hand of government and keeping them in the dark. It makes no sense.

Then there is the "let's just keep spending and add to the deficit approach." The cost of spending so much and adding to the deficit means more inflation. More inflation means your dollar doesn't go near as far as it has in the past.

In the June jobs report, we saw inflation up 4.5 percent, and the consumer price index increased by 5.4 percent, the biggest monthly jump in over a decade.

The rising cost of inflation means that Americans are making tough choices on what is most important to them, like filling up your car with gas or buying food for your family. There is no reason why we should have to be making these choices.

In a nation as great as ours, hard-working Americans shouldn't have to choose. American families are caught in the middle of rising prices and the Democrats' never-ending need to appease the far left.

And then there is the Democrats' view of America, one where Big Government reigns supreme. Well, let me tell you, the Big Government approach does not work, and it never has.

Alabamians want Big Government to get out of the way because they know that Big Government programs only tie their hands and stifle innovation and growth.

We need to give folks an opportunity, not a handout, and right now, Democrats are on the wrong track with that. A government-subsidized economic recovery is not an economic recovery. It is an entitlement state. We need to get back to work.

Prosperity is not purchased through the expansion of Big Government. How many times have we heard that? The expansion of Big Government safety net programs does not make people prosperous. Prosperity is found within the ideas of the American people. It always has been, and it always will.

Democrats are signaling that they are OK with the cost of American families if it means that they can pay for a whole grab bag of far-left policies, like the expansion of Medicare, free college, and amnesty for illegal immigrants.

If all this wasn't bad enough, here is the worst of it: Our Democratic colleagues have taken their priorities that are too radical to pass the Senate and creating an if-then scenario with true infrastructure negotiations.

Forced by far-left voices in their party, Senator SCHUMER and Speaker PELOSI have decided a massive spending bill that has nothing to do with the pandemic or infrastructure should hold actual infrastructure legislation hostage. In their world, if we pass a partisan spending bill, then we can pass infrastructure.

Well, that doesn't sit right with a lot of folks. By linking a bipartisan proposal to a partisan reconciliation package, our Democrat colleagues are showing their cards. The cards show that they really want this reckless tax-and-spend spree to pass, and they are fundamentally unserious about a true infrastructure package that would make needed improvements to roads, bridges, and broadband possible, and that is a shame. By tying budget reconciliation to infrastructure, the American people are the ones who will be left out to dry.

I have always said that I would be in favor of infrastructure. We all would be—a great infrastructure deal, where every penny of every dollar goes toward roads, bridges, broadband, and waterways.

But the American taxpayers know they have to pay for it. They know eventually they will have to pay for it, but they need something that they are putting their money into that they can get something back. But we cannot let a partisan tax-and-spend spree bog us down and hold back the American taxpayers.

This summer, so many Americans are traveling across the country. This includes most of us who travel across our States, me across Alabama. As I have been on the road, I am reminded once again that we need improvements to our infrastructure.

It is more than just fixing potholes on a city street. We rely on infrastructure every day, during our drive to work, trucks moving our goods up and down the highways, when a ship leaves a port with cargo, or when we just get on the internet. All those are infrastructure.

Good infrastructure allows people to move freely, keeps our products flowing, and maintains America's competitiveness in the global economy.

In Alabama, we have got 100,000 miles of public roads, and we need them to be in good shape. Driving on poor roads costs Alabama drivers a total of \$4.2 billion every year. Because of things like vehicle operating costs, traffic congestion, and car crashes, we can tell our roads need work.

We have got 1,000 condemned bridges—1,000—just in the State of Alabama. Out of 16,000 bridges, we have 1,000 that have been condemned that need to be repaired in the worst way.

In an increasingly online world, getting our rural areas access to reliable internet is more important than ever. Whether it is for work, healthcare, or going to school, we need broadband across our entire State. Investing in our infrastructure is investing in our future success. It is way past time to step up and act on this. The American people need help with infrastructure, and that is what we should be concentrating on.

But despite that, our colleagues on the left still can't resist playing politics here. Before the actual bill text of the bipartisan infrastructure framework could be written and before the

pay-fors were negotiated, Leader SCHUMER has called a vote on the framework.

Now, I know it is pretty hard to get a majority of skeptical Senators to vote on anything, much less something that has not even been written yet. We don't even have the bill written, but we are going to vote on it.

But these are serious times that call for serious actions. So we should be very careful considering this framework, not rushing toward arbitrary deadlines.

As our country's economy is trying to recover from the pandemic, anything and everything we do has to be thoughtfully considered, especially when it comes to passing legislation that costs money in the long run. And this is going to cost a lot of money.

Because this is the taxpayers' money, after all—your money—we owe it to the taxpayers to spend their money in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Personally, I don't think it is ever a good time to raise taxes, but I can tell you the absolute worst time is when we are still coming out of an absolute global pandemic.

There are commonsense ways to pay for some of this new infrastructure spending. Chief among them is re-directing all that unused COVID money that the Democrats insisted on spending earlier this year, and there is a lot of it left.

Let me be clear. Raising taxes on the American people should be a non-starter for any potential bill. It certainly is for a lot of people.

Folks, simply put, a dollar spent on traditional infrastructure is a dollar well spent. But it has got to be done in a smart and targeted way, and we can't allow Democrats to hurt Americans by creating an if-then scenario.

Let's spend some time on the infrastructure bill and do it the right way. Then we can turn to debating all the spending that our colleagues on the left have their sights set on. But we have to do the infrastructure bill first.

Hopefully, Congress can deliver the targeted results our country deserves, results that don't increase the tax burden on the American people.

Throughout this debate, you can count on a lot of us to be a strong voice for making infrastructure work for three or four things: Alabama, our neighbors, our country's rural areas, and the American taxpayer.

We can get this done. Let's just do it the right way.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 1520

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam President, I rise again—again—to call for every Senator to have a chance to vote on our bill, the Military Justice Improvement and Increasing Prevention Act. It is time to move the most serious crimes like sexual assault and murder out of the chain of command and put them in the hands of the most capable people in the military—independent, impartial, highly trained uniformed prosecutors.

This is an issue that deserves urgency. I have been calling for a full floor vote since May 24. Since that time, an estimated 3,136 servicemembers will have been raped or sexually assaulted and more will have been victims of other serious crimes. While I am heartened to see, after many years of pushing for reform, that growing numbers of our colleagues, the Department of Defense, and the President have acknowledged that we must move sexual assault and related crimes like sexual violence out of the chain of command, it is simply not enough.

I ask my colleagues to consider what it truly means to have special victim prosecutors looking only at cases of sexual assault and related crimes. It means that all the myriad crimes that are often linked to special victims' cases will get left out and pushed into a system that is not trained to see them for what they are.

Let's just take a simple case of a forged check. Say a soldier takes his girlfriend's checkbook and forges her name. If a commander looks at that, they are likely to take that at face value, see it as a simple, cut-and-dried case of someone stealing money from someone else, and move forward with nonjudicial punishment.

If a military prosecutor was to look at that same case, they might see something entirely different. That is because prosecutors are trained to see linkages between crimes. They are taught to ask different questions. So when they see a forged check, they ask: Is there more happening here? And there usually is.

Research has shown that financial abuse occurs in 99 percent of domestic violence cases. Financial abuse can be the means by which an abuser gains control in a relationship, and it is often the main reason a survivor stays with their abuser. While a prosecutor who has worked on cases of both financial crimes and domestic violence would know that, a commander wouldn't likely know.

The truth is, the realities of intimate partner violence go far beyond sexual assault and harassment. It can include forging checks and carrying out other forms of financial fraud, as well as other serious crimes.

We know that child endangerment can be linked to domestic violence and intimate partner violence, as can kidnapping. Arson can be the tool of someone attempting to cover up these